

BABY SHOWER

CHARACTERS

TRACY MCINTYRE, 25. She is throwing the surprise baby shower for her cousin, Rose.

VICKY MCINTYRE, 19, Tracy's younger sister. Engaged to be married.

AGNES MCINTYRE, (AUNT AGNES), the mother of Tracy and Vicky. She gives piano and voice lessons.

AVERY SIMMONS, 19, Vicky's best friend and sorority sister. She is Maid of Honor for Vicky's wedding. She is in charge of the games for Rose's baby shower.

SALLY MAE, 32, Rose's co-worker. She volunteers at The Women's Resource Center and never met an argument she couldn't join.

NONA IANELLI, anywhere between 72 and 120 years old, not a single organ in working order. She is Agnes and Flo's Grandmother, Rose's Great-grandmother, and the baby-to-be's Great-great-grandmother.

FLORENCE CAULEY, (AUNT FLO), Rose's mother, Agnes' sister.

ROSE CAULEY, 22, the Mother-of-Honor of the baby Shower, Tracy and Vicky's cousin. She's in her eighth month of pregnancy. She is not married and has not told anyone who the father of her child is.

PATTY ADAMS, the young wife of Reverend Adams. She is also eight months pregnant.

NANCY LOWE, 21. A girl from around town. But it's a mystery what she's doing at this baby shower.

Agitated music is playing as lights come up on the scene: the living room of Tracy McIntyre's apartment. Clearly, every chair that she owns has been pushed into this room, nine in all. A long side table has been pushed against the far upstage wall, back and to the center of the room. There are smaller tables, both left and right. The table stage right, set up to hold gifts, already has three brightly wrapped boxes on it. The far upstage left table has a couple of bowls of dips and chips but still has plenty of open space for the large sheet cake that has yet to arrive.

The walls are decorated with toy Alphabet Letters, forming a sort of baby toy wall frieze. A large, almost poster-sized, letter "B" is glued up prominently on the back wall. Far to the right there is an equally large letter "Y." Above these letters a long banner reads "Congratulations, Rose!" in pink and blue pastels.

There are two doors exiting this room. The door stage left is the entrance to the apartment. It is open and a trail of dropped balloons lead from it to the center of the room. There is a window next to this door which looks out onto the street.

*The door stage right leads to the back bedroom, from which **TRACY** emerges, closes the door, leans against it, and sighs it as if she has just finished a difficult task.*

TRACY: Where's my Prozac?

She finds her pill bottle on the gift table stage right and quickly downs a Prozac. She slips the bottle into her pocket for easy future access. On the floor in front of her Tracy finds a large letter "A," fallen from its proper placement on the wall. Tracy sticks the "A" up on the wall next to the "B" and begins searching for the last missing letter. Instead of another letter, Tracy comes upon a cane that has been leaning against the most comfortable chair in the room. She lets loose a little exasperated grunt, grabs the cane, and runs back into the back bedroom with it. Moments later she reemerges with a bunch of unopened umbrellas in her arms.

TRACY: Avery! Aaaaavery!

AVERY (off left): Yo!

Tracy dumps the umbrellas onto the back table, searches the floor and finds another letter, a "B" which she stick up on the wall next to "B" "A".

AVERY (off) Yo-ooo??

TRACY Don't "yo" me! Avery, I need you!

***VICKY** enters through the open door left.*

VICKY Avery is busy with some boxes.

TRACY Vicky! Sis! Am I glad to see you.

VICKY Need a hand, Tracy?

TRACY I need a "Y"

VICKY I need a drink.

TRACY Vicky! There is no booze. This is a baby shower.

VICKY That is precisely why I need a drink, Big Sister.

Vicky pulls a bottle of vodka from her bag.

VICKY I have always preferred Grey Goose to Mother Goose.

Vicky pours herself some punch and vodka, and finds the last missing letter on the snack table.

VICKY Oh, and here's your "Y"

TRACY Stash that bottle away, Sis. Save it for your own party tomorrow.

VICKY This is my week for parties!
Rose's baby shower now,
and my own bridal party tomorrow.

Vicky looks at her engagement ring, eagerly.

TRACY Vicky. Vicky! Earth to Vicky....
Your stagette party can wait.
I need a hand right now. Here.

Tracy tosses Vicky an umbrella.

VICKY Expecting rain?

TRACY Party decorations. A baby shower. Umbrellas. Get it?

Vicky swishes her umbrella around like a sword and, pointing it towards the front door, opens the umbrella just as AVERY enters the room carrying a load of small boxes.

AVERY Expecting rain?

TRACY & VICKY Party decorations.

TRACY We turn the umbrellas upside down
and fill them with baby booties and baby wipes.

VICKY Baby wipes! Not every day you get baby wipes.
You really know how to throw a party, Tracy.

TRACY The umbrellas are more than party decorations...
Rose's favorite movie in the world
is the Umbrellas of Cherbourg

Tracy opens her umbrella and twirls it.

 She'll feel just like Catherine Deneuve.

AVERY Umbrellas of Sure Burp?

VICKY It's French.

AVERY Oh!

VICKY About a girl who is pregnant.

AVERY Oh!

VICKY And she's not married.

AVERY Ohhhhh! The perfect movie for Rose.

TRACY Don't bring that up, for God's sake, Avery.

AVERY Tracy! Just how uncool do you think I am?

VICKY You drive a way cool car.

AVERY *[squeals ear piercingly]*
Did you see? Daddy got me the Camaro
when I got my bid.

TRACY Bid?

VIC & AV Sigma Gamma Pi Pi Pi!
All the townies ask us why
we are such a cool sorority.
It's because we love to parrty!
Sisters! Sisters! Sigma Gamma Pi! Whoooo!

TRACY It must be so nice to have your own personal theme song.

AVERY It's even nicer to be your sister's little sister.

VIC&AV Sigma Gamma Pi Pi Pi!

AVERY *(to Vicky)* I get to host your bachelorette party tomorrow.
And I arrange all the games for today .

VICKY Games. So that bunch of ...*[looking at the boxes]*
diapers? Is a game?

AVERY Empty diaper boxes. I dumped all the diapers out
in my front car seat.
The game is called Taboo. Everybody gets a word,
and when somebody says that word...wait!
Let me put these boxes on the table.

TRACY Use the back table. That one is for the food.

AVERY Food! Oh God! I forgot the cake.
I was supposed to pick up the baby shower cake!
She dumps the boxes into Tracy's arms.
Here. Just set these down on the table.
The bakery isn't far. I'll run and get the cake.
[she stops] Vicky, you want to come with me. If you get my drift?

While Tracy's back is turned, Avery pantomimes taking a drag on a joint.

TRACY Don't you dare leave this apartment, Vicky.
I need you.

AVERY *[leaving]* Okay then, I am off. *[she pokes her head back in the apartment]*
Oh, girls, your mother is coming up the walk.

AVERY leaves, closing the door behind her.

TRACY Mother!?! I thought she wasn't coming.

VICKY She changed her mind.

TRACY She better mind her manners
And keep her mouth shut.

VICKY She thinks it is her duty to attend.
[then defensively] I stopped by at the voice studio and...
I think... that maybe.... I might.... have let slip
that Reverend Adam's wife would be attending.

TRACY Oh, of course! Mom will arrive
the good little Christian soldier,
the good little church choir director,
for the reverend's wife to see.

A knock on the door.

AGNES (off) Tracy! Tracy, dear.

VICKY Mom! Right on time.

TRACY Vicky! There's something I need you to do.
I've got Nona in the back room.

VICKY Nona! How did you get her out?

TRACY Persuasion. I told her she'd see Rose.

VICKY Nona! Does she even know where she's at?

TRACY Well, with Nona it is always hard to tell.
But she knows that she is seeing Rose today.
Go sit with her until the shower starts.
And keep her out of trouble.

Knocking more loudly, then ringing the doorbell and knocking at once.

AGNES (off) Tracy! Tracy! Are you there?

TRACY Go!! And don't let Mom hear you two in there.
Don't come out until Rose and Aunt Flo arrive.

Vicky opens the door right and looks in.

VICKY *[brightly]* Nona!! How are you??

Tracy pushes VICKY into the room and closes the door just as AGNES bursts in through the front door.

AGNES Tracy, dear, could you not hear me?
I was waiting at the door?

TRACY Sorry, Mother, I was busy....um....
vacuuming.

AGNES This room is *swept*?
You missed a dust bunny.
You missed a nest of dust bunnies.

TRACY Mom, I didn't miss them.
I chased them there.
They're cornered now and can't get out.

AGNES I saw Vicky's little friend running off. Avis, is it?

TRACY Avery, Mother, her name is Avery.
You have known her for three years.
She's Vicky's Maid of Honor.

AGNES Not much of an honor. Is that girl quite right?
Sometimes I don't think she has all her buttons.

TRACY I think it's the Sigma Gamma Pi Pi Pi thing.
And it's more her zippers I would worry about than her buttons.

changing the topic quickly
So – you decided to come to Rose's baby shower.

AGNES Rose is my niece. My blood. My sister's child.
Family is stronger than the dishonor
of this shame, of this sin.
When I was young she would have been
quietly sent away until
she could be seen in public again.

TRACY Yes, the fourteenth century must have been
a tough time to grow up in.

AGNES All times have been difficult for women.
All times have conspired to make her fall.
All men have wanted what they could take
without commitment.
If pleasure could be bought,
or if by force or if by woman's foolishness
obtained for free, and then men leave forever.

All times have been difficult for women.
Youth and beauty have been our undoing
all places, all of time, for all of women.

TRACY It's motherly advice like that
that keeps me from dating.

AGNES You don't need to date, dear.
You need to get married.
Here. *[She pulls an envelope from her pocket.]*
A gift would be completely inappropriate.
But Rose will be needing money.

TRACY Thanks Mom, you shouldn't have.

AGNES I know I shouldn't have.
You shouldn't have thrown this baby shower.
It simply isn't done.

TRACY Square one!

Why must you fight me?
Why must I scream
to hear myself thinking?
Where is my dream?
What of my feelings?
Why don't you hear?

AGNES I never fight you
I simply advise,
correct and set right.
You don't realize seducers
and lies surround you.

TRACY [AGNES]	Where is my dream?	[Stealing your dreams.]
	What of my feelings?	[Crushing your feelings.]
	Why don't you hear?	[Why don't you hear?]

BOTH The trouble with having a family
is that you are stuck with your family.

TRACY You are exasperating, Mother.

AGNES You need some eye liner, dear.

Agnes kisses Tracy. This is their stand off truce of love/hate.

AGNES I'm here to help.
She starts moving towards the back room, where Nona and Vicky are.
Should I get some more chairs from the bed room?

TRACY NO!
No, sit down here Mother.
We hardly ever have the time to talk.

AGNES You hardly ever have the time to listen.

TRACY But I'm fascinated. Tell me.
How are your students?
How is the studio?

AGNES The same as it has ever been.
Two dozen children every week
learning scales, or never learning.
Sopranos who should never sing.
Mechanics who should never play.
Except that their parents are willing to pay.

TRACY Fascinating!

The door bell rings
Saved by the bell.

TRIO (*off*) We have come. We have come.
to greet the brand new Mum
and baby-to-be, and baby-to-be.

AGNES Baby shower carolers?

TRACY Martha Stewart recommends them.

AGNES Martha Stewart is a felon.

Tracy opens the door and SALLY MAE, PATTY, and NANCY enter.

TRIO Happy baby shower! Happy baby shower!

TRACY Chill!
Rose isn't here yet. Don't strain your voices.
Her Mom will be bringing her in... in...

She checks her cell phone
...Oh my gosh! Three minutes!
Come in! Come in!

The guests enter, carrying their gifts to the gift table.

AGNES Good afternoon, Mrs. Adams.

PATTY Good afternoon, Mrs. McIntyre.

AGNES How is the Reverend Adams doing?

PATTY Better than me. I'm bloated. I'm tired.
I waddle like a penguin. I want to see my toes.

NANCY A beautiful penguin.

SALLY MAE With beautiful toes.

AGNES Tracy, who is that young girl with the Reverend's wife?

TRACY Not now, Mother.
Welcome everybody.
Have a seat. Have some dip.
Lift up your feet, Mrs. Adams.

PATTY Patty.

Heavy knocks on the door, like someone kicking it. Tracy opens the door and AVERY bounds in carrying a large closed cake box.

AVERY Am I late? Am I late?
I was burning rubber getting back.
I got the baby shower cake!
A rubber ducky baby cake!
I haven't stopped to take a breath.
[aside] Or even much of a toke.
...Where's Vicky?

TRACY (covering) Avery! The cake goes on the snack table.

Door bell rings.

TRACY No time to fuss around.
Just set the box down,
and come hide. They're here!

Everyone finds a seat as Tracy turns out the light..

AGNES Well, this is perfectly uncomfortable.

ALL Shhh!

The door opens. FLORENCE and ROSE enter and stand in the darkened doorway.

FLO Tracy went out shopping.
Let's go in and wait.

They enter the room as the lights flip back on.

ALL (*except Agnes*) Surprise! Happy baby shower!

ROSE Tracy!! [*they hug*] [*mordantly*] A surprise party.
At what point do I cry?
Oh, Cuz, you are my bestest friend.

AGNES Rose! If only you had known,
you could have worn something nicer.

ROSE Cuz, I love you. But I will have to kill you once this is over.

SALLY MAE Surprise, Rose!

ROSE Sally Mae!

SALLY MAE I traded shifts with a volunteer
at the Women's Resource Center to be here.

AGNES [*to Flo*] How nice! She took a break from giving advice
at the local abortion clinic.

FLO Agnes, my sister, always the diplomat.
I'm surprised to see you. I thought you had students to teach.

AGNES I called off choir rehearsal. After all,
[*to Patty*] my motto is "What Would Jesus Do?"

FLO My guess is he would not make such a fuss.

AVERY [*to Rose*] I thought for sure you'd see me run inside.

PATTY Yours is that peacock blue Camaro? Sweet!
I saw you sitting in your car.

TRACY What were you doing sitting in your car?

ROSE The umbrellas are perfect!

TRACY & ROSE The umbrellas of Cherbourg!

ROSE I feel just like Catherine Deneuve.

AGNES Rose is certainly carrying a lot of extra weight.
She'll have trouble losing it again.

FLO Your Tracy looks just fine.
Where is my other niece? Where's Vicky?

As if on cue, the back bedroom door flies open and Vicky bounds out with a "Ta dahh!!"

VICKY Surprise, Rose honey! Happy baby shower!
Although you are the Mother of honor,
I now present to you the guest of honor!

Vicky gestures towards the open door from which emerges, slowly, very unsteadily, NONA IANELLI. She's very agile with her cane, but seems to be headed in no particular direction. Then she stops and corrects her course, and heads towards the nearest cushy chair. She then swings back and forth before dropping herself into her chair. She is clearly zonked out on whatever drugs they give her at the home. And she seems to like her drugs a lot.

ROSE Nona!

FLO & AGNES Grandmother!

VICKY (to Patty) It's the baby's great-great grandmother.

TRACY (to SallyMae) She's our family's oldest living relative.

ROSE (shouting) Hello, Nona! [catches Nona's attention.] Hel-lo! No-na!

NONA Mouth to mouth. Elephant dootie!

TRACY She speaks her own language.

VICKY But she has her moments.
She was talking up a storm about growing up on the farm.

NONA Rabbit pellets. Penguin dust.
Rose! Roses! Buttercups.
[to Vicky] I want some punch!

AGNES Tracy! You took Nona from the nursing home?

TRACY She has an afternoon pass.

AGNES She should never be disturbed!

FLO Agnes, dear, you are the only one
 who seems to be disturbed.

NONA I want some punch!

AGNES This is so wrong!

VICKY I'm on it, Nona.

Vicky gets a glass of punch for Nona. During the course of Avery's explanation of the Taboo game that follows, while no one is watching her, Nona signals to Vicky to come towards her. Nona takes the Grey Goose out of Vicky's jacket and tops off her punch with a shot of vodka. Vicky quickly pockets the bottle. Apparently, Vicky and Nona have been doing shots while waiting in the back room. And Nona can really hold her liquor.

EVERY Hold your horses everybody! I've got this all planned.
 First games, then food, then gifts!
 And the first game is Taboo!
 Everybody gets a rattle with a number.
She gives Tracy the rattles, which are on strings so they can hang around the neck of each guest.
 And everybody gets a card with a word written down
She gives Sally Mae the envelopes to pass out.
 Don't let anybody else see your word!
There is some funny business as each guest checks out her word, while trying to hide it from the others.

This is the song Avery started singing way back before she remembered the cake.

The game is called Taboo. Everybody gets a word,
and when somebody says that word, the word that's
written on your card, you get to take their rattle.
The one with the most rattles wins.

But there's more!
When somebody takes your rattle, you've got to take a box
and answer the question in the box.

AGNES Is anyone else confused?

EVERY But there's more!
 When someone says your word you got to sing:

This is the tune that will keep repeating through the rest of the party, like "Eat the Apple" in Eve.

Ocka, bocka, soda crocka.
Ocka, bocka boo!
Someone said a word that is taboo.
The baby table has a question for you.

Everybody now!

ALL Ocka, bocka, soda crocka.
Ocka, bocka boo!
Someone said a word that is taboo.
The baby table has a question for you.

Rose sings to her baby, and Agnes to herself, while the rest repeat the song:

===== *(everything from here to the next double line is to be sung together)*

ALL Ocka, bocka, soda crocka.
(repeating Ocka, bocka boo!
as needed) Someone said a word that is taboo.
The baby table has a question for you.

ROSE Little pumpkin seed.
Little pumpkin butt.
I'm stuck in this party
It's lucky you're not.
So sleep in your roomy luxury.
Cause this ain't a family you want to meet.
So sleep, baby, sleep.
Your Mommy is here, go to sleep, baby, sleep.

AGNES Who is that girl?
Who is the father?
What ever became of family honor?

=====

AGNES Perhaps we should begin with introductions.
I am Agnes McIntyre.

Tracy starts to say something to introduce herself, but is cut off by her Mother.

TRACY And I...

AGNES And she is my daughter, Tracy McIntyre.
She is the cousin of the mother to be:

Rose Cauley.

ROSE (*raises her hand*) Present!

AGNES And this is Rose's mother. My sister, Flo.
Mrs. Florence Cauley.
This my youngest daughter, Vicky,
who is engaged, by the way, to a wonderful man,
a man whom our family has known for years.

ROSE And off we go, playing the game
Of Daddy, Daddy, who's got a Daddy?

AGNES Rose, dear, that is none of my business.
Nor would I ever be so rude.
And this is Vicky's little friend, Average

AVERY Avery!!

AGNES Avery. (*dismissively*) Yes.
And this is Mrs. Patricia Adams, wife
of our wonderful pastor, the Reverend Adams.

PATTY Call me Patty.

AGNES The Reverend Mrs. Adams. Umm... and you?

SALLY MAE Sally Mae. I work with Rose.
I was so excited about this pregnancy that I...

AVERY Taboo!

SALLY MAE What?

AVERY You said the word written on my card:
Pregnancy.
(*to the rest*) See? Isn't this fun?
Come on! Now we got to sing the song.

=====

ALL Ocka, bocka, soda crocka.
Ocka, bocka boo!
Someone said a word that is taboo.

The baby table has a question for you.

ROSE Someone come here and shoot me quick.

AGNES I hadn't finished what I had to say.

FLO I am completely confused.
=====

NONA Punch drunk gone potty!
(*more insistently*) Punch drunk gone potty!!

FLO Does Nona need to go to the bathroom?

VICKY I think she wants more punch.
 Here, let me help.

*Vicky helps Nona to another spiked cup of punch.
Sally Mae is led by Avery to the table with all the diaper boxes.*

AVERY Pick a box and look inside.

SALLY MAE It's empty.

AVERY I dumped all the diapers out in my Camaro.
 The car is stuffed with disposable paper.
 But look at the inside flap of the box.

SALLY MAE There's writing inside.
(*reading*) "What is the most embarrassing thing
 a man has ever said to you after sex?"

AGNES How insulting!

FLO Agnes, dear, not everyone is insulted after sex.

SALLY MAE No, no...I'm game.
 I want to play this game. Let me think....

He was a drummer
in a local band.
A love-making hottie
with a strong soft hand.
Come Sunday morning
I woke to see
him walk out the door
and away from me.
He said: Hey, girl, thanks for the show.
It was sex having pleasure with you.
He smiled to himself as he walked out the door.
It was sex having pleasure with you.

I ran after
and he came around.
On random weekends
he could be found
with me when his girlfriend
was out of town.
And every time that he came, he'd say:
It was sex having pleasure with you.
His private joke, in his jokey way:
It was sex having pleasure with you.

But I was the joke
and he was the line
that reeled me in
until the time
that five years married
was four too long.
He signed the divorce and said like ice:
It was sex having pleasure with you.
I have never met a man more nice.
It was sex having pleasure...

AVERY

Man! What a bummer.

SALLY MAE

Well, that is the reason why
ever since, I have been bi.
I take my partners as they come.

VICKY

You know, that's really not so dumb.

AGNES

Vicky, child! Hold your tongue.

ROSE

This game is a riot.

I can't wait to try it.

FLO This isn't your traditional baby shower, is it?

AVERY Tradition! Hey! I got a traditional game.
The good old stand by: the baby naming game.
Here!

Avery passes out paper and pens to everyone.

Write down a boy's name for the baby.
Now write down a girl's name for the baby.

A little name-writing music here.

Now take the letters from both of those names
and write the longest word that you can make.

A little scoring anagrams music here.

VICKY Take the "m" and carry the "i"

PATTY How many "e"s in "bleak"?

AVERY Okay, so who's got what?

NANCY "Bet"

PATTY "Pen"

AGNES "Chastity"

ROSE "Seed"

FLO "Poop"

AGNES "Temperance "

AVERY "Roach"

SALLY MAE "Wit"

TRACY "Wind"

VICKY *(triumphant)* "Elephant!"...no, that's not with an "f," is it?
Umm... *(she does some more figuring)* *(defeated)* "Cat"

AGNES "Self-Control"

AVERY Wow! Agnes clearly you are the winner.
What were the names you chose?

AGNES For a boy I chose to name him "Self-Control"
For a girl I chose to name her "Chastity-Temperance"

TRACY *Very* subtle, Mother.

ROSE Vicky, Tracy, you're lucky you're not named "Brain Freeze"
and "Never Able To Do Nothing Right."

AGNES Why can't we play some good Christian naming game?

ROSE Mother, so help me. I know she's your sister.
But she's turning this party into a disaster.

FLO What can I do, dear? She has never listened
to anything that I have ever said.

AGNES This game is not only fun
It is edifying!

(She pulls a Bible out of her purse. There are a number of groans in the room.)

I will name someone from the Bible
and you guess who the Mother and Father are.

ROSE I dare her to name Jesus!

AVERY Hey, that sounds like a load of fun. But...umm
Gosh! I left something back in the Camaro.
I'll just run outside and get it.
Start the game without me.

NONA Take me with you!

FLO (to Sally) Sometimes her meds kick in and she
has absolute coherency.

NONA Take me with you, little girl.
I want to take a walk! NOW!!

Avery goes to Nona and helps her walk out of the apartment. Nona surreptitiously gestures smoking a joint to Avery, who smiles and nods as the two go out.

AGNES Now then, let's just start off easy.
(*she leafs through and announces*) Jehosaphat!

ROSE (*pleading*) Mother!

FLO Agnes, sister, this might not be as fun
for those of us who have not memorized
a thousand verses of King James.
You have been studying since you were a baby in a cradle.

NANCY (*incredulous*) Taboo?
You said "cradle." That's my word.

ROSE Oh joy! The game continues.

VICKY Avery's not here to lead us. But I guess we all should sing.

They all do a very funny, sort of muttered, sort of stammered, rushed version of the song, just to get it done with.

ALL Ocka, bocka, soda crocka.
Ocka, bocka boo!
Someone said a word that is taboo.
The baby table has a question for you.

Flo goes to the table, chooses a box and reads the inner flap.

FLO "What dream did you have that never came true?"

SALLY MAE God! This is better than watching Oprah.

FLO When I was a little girl,
head of curls and gingham dresses,
I dreamed that I would sing and be
the most famous actress on TV.

And plays would be written
and songs would be set
just for me to sing them.
It's time to forget
the childish dreams of yesterday.

I had no use in the end for fame.

But came to sing
more beautifully
than any imagined dream could be
to my little girl, with head of curls and tattered jeans.
She is my Emmy. My Tony. My Rose.

CHORALE (all)

The one we love will take our breath.
The love we give will, unforeseen,
soon land us in heart's quarantine.

All fantasies of perfect love
are empty offers that entreat
us run with teary eyes to grief.

QUARTET (a sprightly waltz, first word on the second beat with Agnes and Flo)

AGNES

We could – we would
have been so good
playing, staying
two as a team.

FLO

My life, my choice.
It weren't your voice,
brought them, caught them
in my bright dream.

TRACY (Double time)

There! They go again right at the starting gate.
And after twenty years
it's all this blood and tears,
this never ending damn debate.

ROSE

Queer! How passionate and how damn resolute.
Your mother never done
with telling off my Mum
with what's long dead and gone. Oh, what a hoot!

AGNES

Had you let me
by now we'd be

ROSE

Strange! Old arguments are never dead and gone.
I really wish it would.

booked for TV
specials and more.

FLO

Sis, just stop it.
Not your puppet.
God, please, drop it
Don't be a bore.

AGNES & FLO

"Ianelli
Sisters" belly
up and finished.
Best let it be. (FLO)
Why should it be? (AGNES)

QUARTET

Life comes knocking
while we're walking
lost in forests
of our own schemes.

So we go to
what we know to
be a freer
path to our dreams.

[end quartet]

FLO

All water under the bridge.

AGNES

And ever since I have had to get by
in this little town
giving music lessons to every
jackass and clown.

ROSE

Mother, why does Aunt Agnes always
blame you for her life?

FLO

That's just her way.
All water under the bridge.

I've never understood
what stands between Aunt Agnes and my Mom.

TRACY

Strange! You'd never guess they were the best of friends.
What hell it is
to have such relatives.
I've seen too much of all the bitching without end.

TRACY & ROSE

Cuz! I'm glad we never had the chance of fame.
'Cause tell me what's the worth
if every one on earth
can recognize you. You're the same.

AGNES

But it was me that drowned under that bridge!

[Avery and Nona come back in from the car.]

AVERY

Man! I got the munchies!

[she picks up one of the balloons]

Man! what an excellent balloon!

This blue is soooo intense!

AGNES

Your little friend is easily amused.

VICKY *(quietly to Avery)*

Let me guess what you've been smoking.

NONA *(swings her arms around Avery, very chummy)*

Silly silly little girl! She goes poopie in her car.

ALL

What?

AVERY *(pointing to the boxes)*

I emptied all these boxes out on my front seat.

My Camaro looks like an incontinence commercial.

Man! I got the munchies.

Cake would be just the thing.

A baby shower cake made up

to look like a little yellow duck.

[She opens the cake box, though no one else can see in the box. She does a double take and shuts the box quickly.]

Let's do something else!

Games anyone?

NANCY

We just finished playing.

AGNES

Taboo! Taboo! "Playing" is my word.

AVERY

Gee! I don't remember using that word.

AGNES

Ocka bocka soda...oh the
hell with it!

Here I will pick you out a box.

[Agnes grabs a box, opens it, and pretends to read.]

"What is your name?

And what are you doing at the baby shower?"

AVERY

Weird! I don't even remember writing that.

TRACY

Mother, let me see that box!

[Agnes rips off the box top and tears it into pieces.]

NONA *[sing song]*

Cheater! Cheater!

Someone ought to beat her!

NANCY

No. I have nothing to hide.

My name is Nancy Lowe.

ALL

Nancy Lowe!

NANCY

And though I didn't get an invitation, I came...

PATTY *[interrupting]*

Because I asked her to.

That's all you need to know.

AGNES

Nancy Lowe, Nancy Lowe.

Isn't she the sister of Ricky Lowe?

QUARTET (Tracy, Vicky, Avery, Flo)
Ricky Lowe!

AGNES
Good for nothing, good for nothing hood!
Ricky Lowe! Nothing about him can be any good.

QUARTET
He's been arrested.
No doubt he's infested.
They say he's detested by every good girl.

AGNES
Maybe Ricky Lowe, that good for nothing Lowe,
has something to do with this shower?
Maybe he is the father?

PATTY
Agnes, you know for a Christian lady,
you can be a real pain in the ass.

SALLY MAE
Taboo. For real this time.
"Ass."

AVERY
Yep! That word I remember.
All together now:

ALL Ocka, bocka, soda crocka.
 Ocka, bocka boo!
 Someone said a word that is taboo.
 The baby table has a question for you.

[Patty chooses a box and reads the question.]

PATTY
"If you were put into witness protection
anywhere in the world
where would you go
so your husband could never find you?"

In college I managed
to major in Spanish
without once departing
the good old U. S. A.

The accents I aped
I encountered on tape.
Never once heard the shape
of a native "Ole!"

Before I could study
abroad, I met Buddy,
about to become an
ordained minister.

He gave me one look.
I abandoned my books.
He proposed. I said yes.
It was not sinister.

The church doors swung open,
the Spanish door closed.
I now often question
the life that I chose.

If I had half a brain.
If I had my own name.
If I could bear the pain.
I'd run off to Spain.

ALL
Ole!

PATTY
Imagine!
Me set free and See ya!
I'm off to Andalucia.
The Mediterranean Sea and
the Spanish mountain peaks.

I'd love to find the harm in
living the life of Carmen
surrounded by hot barmen
and matador physiques.

I would do it all, all on my own.
Yo vivo en la calle Colon.
Hola! Que tal?

ALL
Yo vivo en la calle Colon.
Hola! Que tal?
Yo vivo en la calle Colon.
Hola! Que tal?

PATTY
And Buddy can just go to hell!
Well, *[she pulls herself back together]*
It's not like nine months pregnant I'm going to go.
You should never ask what you don't really want to know.

ALL
You should never ask.
You should never ask.

AVERY
We should ask!
I mean as a game.
A game of riddles.
[everyone groans] [awkward pause]
Who goes first?
Okay, I'll go.

[In the accompaniment we hear the music to "Man I got the munchies"]

Why could you never starve to death
if you were locked up in a room
with nothing but a mattress and a calendar?

ALL
Why could you never starve to death
if you were locked up in a room
with nothing but a mattress and a calendar?

AGNES
I give up.

VICKY
I think we all want to give up.

SALLY MAE

So why could you never starve to death
if you were locked up in a room
with nothing but a mattress and a calendar?

AVERY

Because you could always eat the dates that are in the calendar,
and drink from the springs in the mattress.

[General groans. The riddle music goes on a bit and then Agnes brightens up noticeably.]

AGNES

How about a nice Bible riddle?
Why could they never play poker on Noah's ark?

ALL

Why could they never play poker on Noah's ark?

SALLY MAE

We give up.
Why could they never play poker on Noah's ark?

AGNES

Because Noah sat on the deck!

[Much louder groans. The riddle music plays on in the background as everyone tries to avoid having to go on with this game. Tracy starts to walk towards the cake. Quickly, Avery decides to ask another riddle.]

AVERY

What body part
is the most often mentioned
by people when they are getting stoned?

TRACY

This isn't a game.
It's a psycho-drama.

ALL

What body part is the most often mentioned
by people when they are getting stoned?

AGNES

Does that mean what I think it means?

PATTY

This one I have got to know!
What body part is the most often mentioned
by people when they are getting stoned?

AVERY

[she pantomimes taking a deep hit on a joint, holding the smoke down and passing the joint to Agnes, while speaking with her breath still held.]

'ere!

'ere!

[singing]

Get it? "Here!" "Ear!"

AGNES

Disgusting!

FLO

Actually, it might do you some good
to smoke some nice Norwegian wood.

AGNES

Some good? Some good!
I'll tell you what would do me good.
If you had not walked out on me.
You sang like an angel. And I played so sweet.
We were the Ianelli Sisters.

TRACY *[trying to change the subject]*

Let's all have some cake.

AVERY

NO! Wait! Who wants that ratty old cake?
[She searches desperately for something else to do.]
Oh, looky! Baby shower cards.
[She opens one and reads]
"Wishing you baby dust and sticky vibes."
How sweet!

VICKY

Baby dust?

AGNES

What are sticky vibes?

SALLY MAE

Like Tinkerbelle, they sprinkle baby dust
to keep your baby safe from any trouble.
And sticky vibes are magic thoughts sent out
to keep the fetus properly attached,
a magic to prevent a miscarriage.

[Patty swoons a bit and Nancy helps her into a seat.]

VICKY

Could this party be any more up-beat?

SALLY MAE *[to Rose, Sally is strangely on edge]*

I hope you don't intend to go
to the baby-factory hospital.
They knock you out and cut you open
rather than allow a natural birth.

VICKY

And all that natural pain.

SALLY MAE *[She's on her soap box now]*

The doctor's and their patriarchal methods
to keep us women down and medicated.
Take back your womb!
Give birth in your own bedroom.

AGNES

Oh yes! and tie off the cord with your teeth.

TRACY

Mother!

NONA *[suddenly]*

What's the ugliest tree in the forest?
What's the ugliest tree in the forest??

TRACY

I'm having some cake.
[She opens the box, looks and starts laughing.]

VICKY

What's so funny about a cake?
[She looks into the box]
Oh my God! look how big!

FLO *[who has been looking out the window]*
Avery, dear, is your car engine running?

NONA
What's the ugliest tree in the forest?

ROSE
What is Nona babbling?

AVERY
I think she's stoned.

[Vicky laughs uncontrollably. Agnes gets annoyed.]

AGNES
What is all this fuss about?
[She looks into the box. The audience never sees what is in the box.]
The cake! Why....that...is....obscene!

VICKY
It is obscenely big.

ROSE
Let me see! Let me see! Whee!!
With icing too.
Better than real life!

FLO
Avery, dear, your car...

AVERY
I picked up the cake at the very last minute.
A yellow baby ducky cake.
But they gave me the cake I ordered for tomorrow,
for Vicky's stag party.

VICKY
With a cake like this I just can't wait
to see what you ordered for entertainment.

FLO
Avery, dear, is there supposed to be
smoke coming out of your car?

AVERY

What?

[She looks out the window, freaks and runs out of the apartment.]

FLO

Her car seems to be smoking.

NONA

What's the ugliest tree in the forest?

TRACY

Nona seems to be smoking too.

SALLY MAE

Riddle! She's asking a riddle.

ALL

What's the ugliest tree in the forest?

AGNES

I don't know, Nona. Tell me.

What is the ugliest tree in the forest?

NONA *[with sudden vehemence]*

YOU!

TRACY

Y..E...W, it's a very bad riddle.

PATTY

Nancy, help me up.

NONA

You have been the ugliest.

Bitter. Hard.

Never forgiving Flo.

[Avery rushes into the room.]

AVERY

Quick! Call nine one one!

My Camaro! My Camaro is on fire!

The diapers in the front seat caught on fire.

VICKY

How could they catch on fire?

NONA

I lost the cigarette you handed me.
I think I dropped it.

AGNES

Dope burns down her car!

NONA *[fully in her right mind now, and formidable]*
Agnes McIntyre, shut up!

Vicky, dear, go help your friend put out her car.
[Vicky and Avery go out, Vicky on her cell phone calling.]
Bitter and hard and unforgiving
all your life, ever since
your sister Florence went and got
pregnant without a husband.

ROSE

Mother?

FLO

Rose!

I lied about your father. He was gone
months before ever you were born.
But he gave me you.

ROSE

I am my mother's daughter.

AGNES

He stole you away from me!

NONA

No! You stole your own life's happiness away.
And never let poor Flo forget.
And never let the children know.
Before I die I'll speak the truth.

PATTY

Nancy! I am bleeding! Nancy, help!

NANCY

The ambulance will meet us.
Let's go out.
[to Agnes and the family]
Not that it was ever your business to know.

But Patty has had trouble twice before.
Not gone full term.
So she hired me, a mid-wife and a nurse,
to watch over her and protect.

Oh, and by the way.
My brother Ricky may be a convict,
but he is more honest
than anything I have seen here.

Come, Patty, lean on me.

[Nancy and Patty leave.]

[Vicky sticks her head in from the door.]

VICKY
Tracy! Where's your garden hose?

TRACY
I'm coming.

[Vicky, who has been drinking steadily for a few hours now, passes out and falls to the floor.]

FLO
I will help.

And when I return, Rose,
we'll have a good long talk.

And when I return, Agnes,
I expect you will be gone.

TRACY
Yes, Mother. Time to go.

AGNES
But...

TRACY
NO! Mother, it's time we all stop listening to you.
We will live our lives
as we choose to.
You go live your own.

AGNES

I didn't use to be the villain.
We were the Ianelli Sisters once.

[Agnes leaves, Tracy follows, both stepping over Vicky. Sally Mae seems shell shocked.]

SALLY MAE

Baby dust and sticky vibes
and promises and wishes
until the time
that five years married
was three births I miscarried.
He walked away, and I knew what he thought:
It was pain, it was pain, never pleasure.

[She walks out.]

NONA

Rose, don't feel too bad.
You've only known your family your whole life.
I have put up with them since they were born.
But I have seen enough to know
that you will grow
and this child will be strong, and glad, and loved.

Breathe in deep
and think all good.
And trust in the universe.
For we are held. We are all held.
And we have been put here to hold each other.

[Nona and Rose embrace.]

NONA and ROSE

Breathe in deep
and think all good.
And trust in the universe.
For we are held. We are all held.
And we have been put here to hold each other.

[The siren of a fire engine can be heard just outside the room. Through the window and the open front door the flashing red lights of the fire engine rake the apartment as the lights slowly dim.]

END OF OPERA